

Message Text

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ACTION INR-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 INRE-00 HA-05 NEA-10 SSO-00
NSCE-00 CIAE-00 L-03 H-01 PA-01 ICAE-00 SS-15
SP-02 IO-13 TRSE-00 /073 W
-----058695 171532Z /46
O 171514Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7200

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FOR INR

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: UR, AU
SUBJECT: HOST GOVERNMENT REACTION TO SOVIET TRIALS

REF: STATE 178559

1. THERE HAS BEEN NO OFFICIAL REACTION BY GOA OR AUSTRIAN POLITICAL LEADERS SINCE SENTENCING IN SOVIET TRIALS. AUSTRIA'S TOP POLITICAL AND GOVERNMENTAL LEADERS ARE, OF COURSE, MOSTLY ON VACATION; HOWEVER, APPEALS WERE MADE ON BEHALF OF ACCUSED BY BOTH MAJOR AUSTRIAN POLITICAL PARTIES AND AUSTRIA'S LARGEST POLITICAL YOUTH GROUP. EMBASSY BELIEVES GOA AS SUCH MAY AVOID ANY OFFICIAL COMMENT THAT WOULD COMPROMISE POSSIBLE PRIVATE, PERSONAL APPEALS ON BEHALF OF ACCUSED BY CHANCELLOR KREISKY SUCH AS CHANCELLOR HAS PREVIOUSLY MADE WITH SUCCESS IN CASES OF OTHER PERSECUTEES.

2. FOLLOWING ARE EMBASSY TRANSLATIONS OF UNCLASSIFIED TEXTS OF A) TELEGRAM TO BREZHNEV FROM SOCIALIST PARTY (SPO) SECRETARIES AND MP'S, B) APPEAL ISSUED BY PEOPLE'S PARTY (OVP) GENERAL SECRETARY MP SIXTUS LANNER, AND C) OPEN LETTER TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BREZHNEV IN CASE OF ALEXANDER GINZBURG FROM CHAIRMAN OF YOUNG OVP AND VICE PRESIDENT OF EUROPEAN UNION OF YOUNG CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS MP JOSEPH HOECHTL:

A. "THE SPO REGRETS MOST DEEPLY THE TRIALS OF ALEXANDER GINZBURG AND ANATOLY SHCHARANSKY. IT EXPRESSES THE HOPE THAT THESE TRIALS WILL BE HALTED BECAUSE THEY VIOLATE THE

HELSINKI FINAL ACT. AS IT HAS THROUGHOUT ITS HISTORY, THE SPO EMPHASIZES ITS SOLIDARITY WITH THE AFFLICTED AGAINST WHOM TRIALS ARE MADE FOR POLITICAL REASONS. FOR THE AUSTRIAN SOCIALIST PARTY: KARL BLECHA AND FRITZ MARSCH, CENTRAL SECRETARIES." (SOURCE: SOCIALISTISCHE KORRESPONDENZ, 7-11-78)

B. "LANNER: APPEAL IN FAVOR OF SOVIET DISSIDENTS. "IN CAMERA CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS AGAINST A NUMBER OF MEMBERS OF THE SO-CALLED HELSINKI GROUP HAVE BEEN UNDERWAY IN THE SOVIET UNION SINCE YESTERDAY. THEY ARE ACCUSED OF ANTI-SOVIET AGITATION AND PROPAGANDA, IN ONE CASE EVEN OF HIGH TREASON. THERE IS THE THREAT TO THEM OF LONG-TERM SENTENCES TO PRISON OR PERHAPS EVEN OF A DEATH SENTENCE.

"THE OVP DOES NOT, OF COURSE, WANT TO INTERFERE IN CURRENT PROCEEDINGS IN OTHER COUNTRIES. HOWEVER, FOR REASONS OF HUMANITY AND IN THE SENSE OF THE HELSINKI AGREEMENT, THE CREATION OF WHICH THE OVP UNCONDITIONALLY PROMOTED, THE OVP WANTS TO ADDRESS AN URGENT APPEAL TO THE LEADERS IN THE SOVIET UNION TO HAVE THE TRIALS AGAINST THE ACCUSED SOVIET DISSIDENTS CARRIED OUT IN SUCH SPIRIT AS THE COUNTRIES THEN PARTICIPATING IN HELSINKI, INCLUDING THE SOVIET UNION, HELPED TO GENERATE.

"WE APPEAL TO THE LEADING SOVIET PERSONALITIES NOT ONLY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IN THE INTEREST OF THE ACCUSED, BUT IN OUR CONCERN FOR THE CONTINUATION AND FOSTERING OF A POLICY OF DETENTE, MAINLY BETWEEN THE SUPER POWERS, WHICH WOULD BE GROSSLY DISTURBED BY HARSH AND INHUMAN SENTENCES.

"WE TURN OFFICIALLY TO THE RESPONSIBLE MOSCOW AGENCIES BECAUSE WE TRUST, SINCE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CONFIDENT RELATIONS BETWEEN AUSTRIA AND THE SOVIET UNION WHICH STARTED ALREADY IN THE TIME OF FEDERAL CHANCELLOR RAAB, THAT AN EARNEST AND UNSELFISH APPEAL ON OUR PART WILL NOT BE DISMISSED AS PROPAGANDA BY MOSCOW BUT WILL BE CAREFULLY REVIEWED AND, AS WE HOPE, GIVEN DUE CONSIDERATION." (SOURCE: OVP PRESSEDIENST, 7-11-78)

C. "HOECHTL: APPEAL FOR MERCY TO BREZHNEV FOR SOVIET DISSIDENTS. "1978 IS A YEAR OF HUMAN RIGHTS FOR THE EUROPEAN UNION OF YOUNG CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS. IN HIS CAPACITY AS VICE PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION OF YOUNG CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND CHAIRMAN OF THE YOUNG OVP, MP JOSEF HOECHTL ADDRESSED AN OPEN LETTER TO SOVIET PRESIDENT BREZHNEV IN WHICH HE EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT THE CHARGES AGAINST THE SOVIET CITIZEN ALEXANDER GINZBURG.

THE LETTER READS AS FOLLOWS:

"MR. PRESIDENT:

"AS VICE PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION OF YOUNG
CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND CHAIRMAN OF THE YOUNG OVP, THE
LARGEST POLITICAL YOUTH ORGANIZATION IN AUSTRIA WITH OVER
100,000 MEMBERS, I TURN TO YOU WITH AN URGENT APPEAL:

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INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 INRE-00 HA-05 NEA-10 SSO-00
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ICAE-00 IO-13 NSAE-00 /073 W
-----058702 171532Z /46

O 171514Z JUL 78

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"A FEW DAYS AGO THE SOVIET CITIZEN ALEXANDER GINZBURG WAS
ACCUSED OF 'SOVIET PROPAGANDA'. THE CHARGE IS BASED ON
GINZBURG'S CONSISTENT PLEDGE FOR THE FULFILLMENT OF OBLI-
GATIONS CONTAINED IN THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT.

"IT IS COMPLETELY UNCONCEIVABLE TO ME THAT GINZBURG IS
BLAMED FOR HIS ACTIVITY, WHEN THE SOVIET UNION HAD
PARTICIPATED IN THE EUROPEAN SECURITY CONFERENCE AND
SIGNED THE FINAL ACT OF HELSINKI.

"IN THE NAME OF THE YOUNG OVP AND THE EUROPEAN UNION OF
YOUNG CHRISTMAN DEMOCRATS, I THEREFORE APPEAL TO THE
RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES IN THE SOVIET UNION TO RENOUNCE ANY
FURTHER PROSECUTION OF ALEXANDER GINZBURG.

"IN THE HOPE THAT THIS APPEAL WILL BE NO VAIN REQUEST, I
REMAIN, MP MAG. JOSEF HOECHTL."

(SOURCE: OVP PRESSEDIENST, 7-12-78) WOLF

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DISSIDENT FACTIONS, TRIALS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978VIENNA06443
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780292-1119
Format: TEL
From: VIENNA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780750/aaaabqjy.tel
Line Count: 166
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: adebf071-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION INR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 STATE 178559
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1980934
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HOST GOVERNMENT REACTION TO SOVIET TRIALS
TAGS: SHUM, UR, AU
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/adebf071-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014